DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 369 EA 016 800

AUTHOR Chase, Cheryl M.; Kane, Michael B.
TITLE The Principal as Instructional Leader: How Much More Time before We Act?
INSTITUTION Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO. Task Force on Education for Economic Growth.
REPORT NO ECS-WP-TF-83-2
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 30p.; A background paper.
AVAILABLE FROM ECS Distribution Center, Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80295 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Evaluation; Administrator Role; Incentives; Instructional Improvement; *Leadership Qualities; *Occupational Information; *Principals; School Based Management; Student Attitudes; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Time Management

ABSTRACT

An abundance of research on principals as instructional leaders reveals their confusion about their job descriptions and suggests means of improving their instructional leadership. Recent literature addresses three questions about principal roles: (1) how a principal determines his or her relationship to teachers and students; (2) how principals manage their time, compared to managers in industry; and (3) what characteristics are shared by effective principals. Research shows that principals' job descriptions are vague, leaving their instructional leadership duties to their own discretion. Furthermore, principals' time is generally managed more sporadically than the smooth schedules of executives. Effective principals, though, seem to exhibit effective organizational qualities and vision in establishing and maintaining high instructional standards in a confident educational environment. Thus, principals' instructional leadership can best be improved by better defining their roles, developing fair evaluation and incentive systems for them, and developing on a districtwide basis plans for leadership improvement that specify leadership objectives, activities, resources, and timelines. (JW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: HOW MUCH MORE TIME BEFORE WE ACT?

by

Cheryl M. Chase
and
Michael B. Kane

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. V. Allen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 016 800

THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER:

HOW MUCH MORE TIME BEFORE WE ACT?

by

Cheryl M. Chase
and
Michael B. Kane

Working Paper No. TF-83-2

Background Papers for the
Task Force on Education for Economic Growth

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street
Denver, Colorado 80295

Additional copies of this paper can be purchased from
the ECS Distribution Center.

The authors are indebted to Michael Cohen of the National Institute of Education for his valuable contributions to this paper.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

1. NEED 1

2. RESEARCH 2

3. EXPERIENCE 11

4. ACTIVITIES 12
Manager or Instructional Leader 13
The Person or the Function 14
Basic Activities 15
Other Activities 18

5. CONCLUSION 21

REFERENCES 22

INTRODUCTION

What happens in a school building is significantly influenced, if not determined, by the principal. Effective principals create and nurture environments conducive to learning. They are in control, committed to quality, focused on changes that support improvement and able to inspire others who influence the learning of individual students. The Task Force on Education and Economic Growth has addressed the importance of the role of principal as instructional leader in stating:

> We recommend that the school principal in each school be acknowledged as the school's leader and as the manager of its instructional program. The principal should be freed from distractions, encouraged to give priority to improving classroom instruction; given sufficient discretion over personnel and fiscal planning; and put squarely in charge of maintaining the school's morale, discipline and academic quality. This means that in many places, the prevailing definition of the principal's role must be changed to put the principal squarely in charge of educational quality in each school.

1. NEED

Awareness of the need to strengthen the principal's role as an instructional leader has grown among researchers, education practitioners, the business community and the general public. Numerous studies, including those known as "Effective Schools Research," point to the importance of strong administrative leadership by school principals, particularly in instructional matters. Principals themselves, both elementary and secondary, identify working with teachers to improve instruction as their primary responsibility (Cornett, 1983). Yet, while principals rank instructional leadership as their primary function, they do not feel they have the time to devote to instructional improvement (McLeary and Thompson, 1979). In reality, principals have responded to the changing nature of their jobs by moving from a focus on instructional leadership to a focus on management (McDaniel, 1982).

Historically, principals have been selected by school boards to perform a limited number of administrative tasks while continuing to fill their primary roles as teachers and instructional leaders. Today's principal is faced with a much more complex situation due to factors that include:

1. Increased size of the school and sheer number of administrative tasks

2. Increased and specialized expertise requirements in the content of instruction (e.g., science, computer technology), the number of subjects taught (e.g., electives at the secondary level), and the process of instruction (e.g., what are the most effective ways to teach reading, math, etc.?)

3. Increased and more specialized management skills (e.g., accountability systems, budgeting)

4. More complex legal procedures (e.g., due process, student suspension)

5. Increased and more complex state-legislated programs (e.g., competency testing, basic skills) (McDaniel, 1982)

The apparent discrepancy between what "should be" and what "is" raises many questions: How does a principal determine the nature and extent of his or her role as instructional leader? If principals report lack of time as a major obstacle to providing instructional leadership, how do they as a group spend their time and how does that compare to the ways other administrators, such as managers in industry, spend their time? What do we know about the characteristics of effective principals? A summary of research related to each of these questions follows.

2. RESEARCH

- How does a principal determine the nature of his or her role as an instructional leader?

People cannot perform well if they do not know clearly what is expected of them. Once the job performance requirements are clearly established, they know what they are supposed to do and that their performance will be measured in terms of how well they achieve the stated objectives. A clear job description provides guidelines by which individuals determine their behaviors and work toward some level of expected performance.

We might assume that a principal knows that he or she is somehow expected to be an instructional leader. However, the available research does not bear this out.

Formal descriptions of what principals are expected to do generally are not specific enough to provide any real sense of how or toward what ends their work should be done. Evidence shows that job descriptions are outdated, particularly in light of the

changing nature of the principalship. In 1979 Pohland and Higbee conducted a content analysis of formal job descriptions of principals in 69 school districts and compared their findings with data from a similar study conducted in 1931 by Wang. They found little change in formal statements of the principal's duties over the 48-year period. Since the conditions under which a principal operates have changed dramatically in those 48 years, school districts need to reassess what it means to be an instructional leader in the eighties and develop concrete descriptions of expected behavior.

In a survey conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978), principals reported ambiguous and conflicting role descriptions as a major source of frustration in their daily work. In a recent study, principals were described as being more concerned about "vagueness of language and lack of clearcut administrative direction than about the rigidity and restrictiveness of tight rules that provide too little administrative discretion" (Morris, 1981, p. 215).

As recently as 1982, many principals studied did not know why they were selected for the job (Baltzell and Dentler, 1983), and once selected, found self evaluations of their performance to be inconsistent with those of their supervisors and staffs (Schmitt). These findings suggest that principals are left to define their own jobs, a difficult if not impossible task given the varied and often conflicting expectations of students, teachers, supervisors and the community.

Sarason (1971) found that principals have considerable discretion in defining their roles and that the authority of individual principals depends on their ability and willingness to use decision-making opportunities that do exist. In describing the wide variation in how principals use discretion to shape their jobs, Morris (1981) states:

> Some principals enjoy working with teachers and tinkering with strategies for instructional improvement. They often experience a sense of frustration and defeat in these initiatives, but find fulfillment in making the effort, hoping that there will be a pedagogical change for better "in some way." Other principals avoid activities which have no end product, and orient their energies toward those activities which seem to exhibit some observable payoff. They occupy themselves with fund raising, with procurement of materials or equipment, with the development of extracurricular activities. Still other principals seem to enjoy the "law enforcement" or pastoral aspects of their job. They devote energies to student counseling, to school discipline, and to the never-ending task of straightening out miscreants and directing them, through father-figure therapy, into positive channels of adult

> life. Finally, still other principals enjoy the quasi-political aspects of their position. They like to "work the streets" by spending time with community people, with PTA mothers, with local politicians, and to parlay this "public affairs" behavior into high visibility for their schools and themselves with the district superintendent and those in higher echelons. The job of the principal therefore takes on the coloration of the practitioner's own value set and personal preferences (pp. 218-219).

School districts face the challenge of developing job descriptions that provide clear direction for principal behavior. The descriptions must be specific enough to guide principals in setting priorities, yet broad enough to allow them to determine how they will implement those priorities, given variations in the schools and communities in which they operate.

- If principals report lack of time as a major obstacle to providing instructional leadership, how do principals as a group spend their time and how does that compare to time used by managers in industry?

Principals live in a hectic, demanding world influenced by the expectations of students, teachers, district supervisors, parents and the community. Balancing and integrating the often conflicting and ambiguous expectations of these groups with the principal's own views of where the school is and should be going leads to work days characterized by frequent interruptions, minor crises and brief interactions with a variety of different people (Peterson, 1978; Sproul, 1977; and Martin, 1980).

A recent comprehensive study, The Urban Principal: Discretionary Decision-making in a Large Educational Organization (Morris, 1980), recorded and analyzed the behavior of 16 Chicago-area principals over two years, and then compared their behavior with that of chief business executives. The principals, male and female, experienced and inexperienced, were selected from small, medium and large schools with a variety of racial and economic student mixes.

In this study, Morris describes the principal's job as a "manager's balancing act." On the one hand, principals must act to insure the stability of the school as an organization with a controlled and orderly learning environment. These activities focus on maintaining student discipline and safety, monitoring the physical facilities of the building, enforcement of school rules, protecting teachers and the instructional program from destructive outside interference, conducting teacher evaluations and rewarding exceptional teacher performance. On the other hand, principals are expected to change and improve the curricula, enhance staff effectiveness and build community relations that modify people's

attitudes and experiment with new types of relationships and practices. The conflict appears to be between maintaining the school as an ongoing functioning organization and introducing changes or improvements likely to require a redefinition of how the organization operates. The conflict is exacerbated by unclear definition from supervisors and daily exposure to conflicting expectations.

In comparing the management behavior of the school principals he observed with that of chief business executives in large organizations (Mintzberg, 1973), Morris found some significant differences. Table 1 summarizes those findings.

Table 1

COMPARATIVE WORKLOAD

	Elementary School Principals	Secondary School Principals	Chief Executives
Mail and formal written communication	12%	7%*	22%
Telephone	7	7	6
Scheduled meetings	3**	3**	60
Unscheduled meetings	65	76	10
The Tour	25-30	25-30	3

*Notes written in longhand to teachers or handcarried to parents are not included in the total.

**These percentages represent time spent in a typical work day. Major three-to-four hour meetings called by superintendents about once a month are excepted.

Note: The percentages of time spent on the activities listed in Table 1 do not add to 100% for principals due to overlaps such as unscheduled meetings during touring time. That is, the Mintzberg model for analyzing chief executive's time does not fit exactly the time use by principals.

1. Mail and Written Communication. Executives in business spent a much larger percent of their time communicating in writing. As a group, principals were more comfortable with oral communication and "found the drafting of memos, letters or reports an unwelcome chore" (Morris, p. 186).

2. Telephone. No significant differences were found in the behavior of principals and business executives.

3. Scheduled meetings. Mintzberg found that businessmen managed primarily through scheduled meetings. In addition, executives' meetings averaged 68 minutes. Principals, in contrast, spent very little time in scheduled encounters and their meetings averaged less than 30 minutes.

4. Unscheduled meetings. Chief executives spent only 10% of their time on unscheduled meetings averaging about 12 minutes each. School principals, both elementary and secondary, spent the greatest percentage of time in unplanned meetings, principals averaging less than three minutes each. Morris describes the principal as one who is constantly on the move and constantly being interrupted.

5. The Tour. The Tour refers to time spent walking the work facility. It is clear from the data that business executives do not use touring as an important management strategy, while principals spend 25% to 35% of their time in this activity.

The Morris study describes significant differences in the behavior of chief executives from business and principals. The chief executives appear to operate in a more rational, controlled environment (e.g., most of their time spent on scheduled meetings of relatively long duration) than do principals, who appear to spend most of their time on the run.

Looking at how these two groups spend their time might cause one to ask a number of questions about the use of principal time. For example, most of a principal's day is spent in unscheduled meetings of three minutes or less, in touring the building and making his or her physical presence felt. Could that time be spent more productively? How much is the management behavior that principals have developed a function of the fact that they are responsible for children? How much is a function of role ambiguity? What kinds of support and training would free principals from the tasks that currently consume their time?

Yet, caution must be exercised in drawing firm conclusions from this comparison of time use. The Morris study compares the behavior of chief executives in business organizations, a position equivalent to that of superintendent in a public school district with that of principals who are middle-level managers. That leads to another question. Are different uses of time and types of administrative behavior needed by managers at different levels of

the organization? A study recently completed by Kotter (1982), a professor at the Harvard Business School suggests that this may be the case. Kotter studied the behavior of successful general managers operating in various industries (e.g., tire and rubber manufacture, newspaper, consumer products, etc.) responsible for sales ranging from $1 million to over $1 billion per year. Kotter states:

> A rather large gap exists between the conventional wisdom on management functions, tools, and systems on the one hand and actual managerial behavior on the other. The former is usually discussed in terms of planning, controlling, staffing, organizing and directing; the latter is characterized by long hours, fragmented episodes, and oral communication. Actual behavior, as a study of successful general managers shows, looks less systematic, more informal, less reflective, more reactive, less well organized, and more frivolous than a student of strategic planning systems, MIS, organizational design would ever expect (Kotter, p. 156).

The successful general managers observed by Kotter spent an average of 75% of their time with others in short disjointed conversations, rarely seemed to make big decisions, rarely gave "orders" but relied instead on influencing others, regularly went around the formal chain of command, asked lots of questions, frequently joked and discussed issues unrelated to substantive work in the organization, worked long hours and spent considerable time reacting to others. In short, their outward behavior appears very similar to behaviors observed among principals.

Yet the general managers that Kotter observed were very much in control. They achieved control by setting "agendas" and building "networks" of relations that were used to accomplish their agendas. Kotter refers to agendas as "loosely connected goals and plans" (p. 160) that are consistent with more formally stated organizational goals. The agendas contain long range goals, statements of priorities and lists of strategies and plans. Successful general managers also build networks or personal relationships with people at all levels of the organization and outside the organization. Relationships were built with anyone who might influence the general manager's ability to produce. Once established, the networks were used to help the general manager satisfy their agendas.

Kotter's study suggests the importance of personal or building-level planning by principals to accomplish overall goals of the school district. There is no doubt that principals develop networks or relationships with a multitude of people who influence the school, but it is unclear how or towards what ends principals use those networks. If school districts value the principal as instructional leader, they must establish overall goals and

structures that assist the principal in developing his or her personal goals and strategies for attaining those goals.

To return to the original question of whether different behaviors are needed by administrators at different levels within the organization, the evidence suggests they are. Superintendents and their staffs need to engage in formal planning to develop clear direction for the school district. Principals need planning and implementing strategies that are workable within their buildings and are consistent with the overall goals of the school district.

Finally, findings reveal that schools and school systems are different from other kinds of organizations and need to be managed differently. Weick (1982) describes schools as "loosely coupled systems" that are less formal and hierarchical than traditional bureaucratic organizations. The latter are "tightly coupled systems with a) clearly spelled rules for behavior, b) agreement and understanding about the meaning of the rules by individual at all levels in the organization, c) established procedures to monitor and evaluate conformance with the rules and d) mechanisms for feedback to improve the functioning of the organization." The various levels of organization are tied closely together in rational ways that contribute to the organization's capacity to produce.

In school districts, the central office, individual schools and individual classrooms operate independently, particularly in the instructional arena (Deal and Celotti, 1980). Although superintendents have line authority over principals and principals have line authority over teachers, they generally do not directly focus that authority on instructional issues. As a result, much of the instruction that occurs in classrooms is determined by individual teachers. This is likely to be even more pronounced in secondary schools. In describing secondary schools, Cusick states:

> With the structure such that the administrators spend their time on attendance, discipline and public relations, the day-to-day responsibility for curriculum falls to the teachers who have two sets of demands on them. The first is that they instruct and learn to "get along with the students," the second is that they not burden the already busy administrator with additional disciplinary problems. What it amounts to is that teachers left alone in the classes and charged with maintaining order, instructing and getting along with students are themselves the creators of the vast number of electives offered. It is the teacher who creates the diverse courses to fulfill what they perceive to be the demands of the students, and in order to fulfill themselves as teachers and individuals (Cusick, 1982-1983, p. 17).

Yet, while studies paint pictures of school instructional programs as loosely coupled or loosely managed, we find that effective principals exhibit behaviors that cause the school to be more tightly coupled. They set goals, they communicate expectations, monitor progress and work towards improvement. The behaviors rationally and cumulatively contribute to quality instruction for students. In effect, they demonstrate the "agenda-building" behaviors of general managers in Kotter's study.

- What are the characteristics of effective principals?

Although a significant amount of research has been conducted on the school principal, studies have not produced a clear and easy-to-follow recipe for making principals into effective instructional leaders. Effective schools research that has focused primarily on elementary schools in large urban school districts tells us what conditions are found in effective schools and suggests, but does not describe, operationally specific actions principals should engage in to support student learning (Bossert, 1982). Nevertheless, the research does offer valuable insights that need to be considered in developing plans for improving the instructional leadership role of individual principals operating in varied educational and social environments.

The characteristics of effective principals that emerge from the research include:

- A sense of vision about where the school is and where it can go (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Cohen and Manasse, 1982). By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school and by setting and communicating to the staff personal goals for the school, the effective principal is able to set priorities and devote time to efforts that make a difference rather than being consumed by organizational maintenance tasks.

- The ability to provide leadership for the development and implementation of clear and precise instructional goals (Manasse, 1982; Wellisch, 1978; Levine and Stark, 1982). The effective principal is able to work with staff to develop orderly, sequential and cumulative learning experiences for students by insuring that there is consistency between goals, grade and classroom objectives, instructional content and evaluations of student performance.

- A view of instructional improvement as an ongoing process (Little, 1981; Wellisch, 1978). By continually communicating expectations for teachers to undertake instructional improvement efforts, by participating in the improvement efforts themselves, by rewarding teachers who try to improve and protecting teachers from competing demands, effective

principals establish a climate where experimentation and growth can occur.

- The ability to establish and maintain a healthy learning environment free from disruption (Persell, 1982; Morris, 1981). Effective principals create an orderly and safe environment where teachers, freed from unnecessary interruptions and demands, can teach and students can learn.

- The ability to secure and allocate resources in ways that support appropriate staff and student behavior (Morris, 1981; Lortie, 1983). Effective principals are able to secure the resources needed by teachers to improve instruction and allocate them in ways that support and reward desirable staff and student behaviors.

- A commitment to quality and a willingness to set high standards and expectations for teachers and students (Brookover, 1979; Morris, 1981; Huff, 1982). In schools where principals and teachers hold high expectations for students, achievement is greater than in schools where low expectations are communicated.

- Confidence in their ability to take action and influence situations (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Morris, 1981). Effective principals view themselves as leaders responsible for the learning of the students in their building and are active in the use of their leadership, creatively working within the "system" to acquire that which is needed to support quality instruction for their students.

As indicated earlier in this section, the effective schools research does not describe operationally the specific actions principals should engage in to support student learning. For example, there are no guidelines for helping principals acquire "vision" or "confidence in their ability to take action and influence situations." We know there are many different approaches to establishing goals and monitoring their implementation but this research does not point to a particular approach. While this may initially be seen as a limitation, it is probable that there is no one best way to establish the conditions necessary for effective schools. Instead, our current level of knowledge offers general guidelines and provides great opportunities for local schools and districts to develop approaches that are workable in their environments. This idea also is supported by the notion that different approaches are needed in different situations (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977; Yukl, 1981). Essentially this research says that a particular instructional leadership tactic must be selected in the context of the school, considering such things as the size of the school, the experience and expertise of the staff, and the political environment. In a recent publication of the National Association

of Secondary School Principals, Yukl summarizes the research on managerial leadership and the effective principal. In his review of situation theories, he states:

> . . . Situation theories also provide insights about differences in role requirements across different schools. For example, delegation of responsibility for administrative functions should be greater for larger schools than for smaller ones, since the administrative workload increases with size. Problems with subordinates are likely to be handled in a more formalized, less personal matter, since the principal in a large school has less time to spend with individuals. Because roles are more specialized and operations are more complex in high schools than in elementary schools, more coordination and planning is probably needed . . . . The need for coaching, advice, and support should be much less when teachers are highly experienced than when they are not, such as in a newly established school or in a school with many young, inexperienced teachers . . . . (Yukl, 1982, p. 7).

The list of potential environmental variables is endless and needs to be carefully analyzed in each individual situation. There are no tried and true strategies that apply equally to each situation. The success of a particular strategy will depend on the extent to which one integrates the research knowledge base with his or her own knowledge of the needs and constraints in individual situations.

3. EXPERIENCE

Although the literature on improving the instructional leadership of principals focuses more on what should be done than on what is being done, some promising efforts have been undertaken:

- In Florida the state legislature has established school-site management that gives the principal control over the use of finances. With fiscal control the principal can have greater opportunities to use dollars to support instructional movement. One study of school-site management in Florida showed greater emphasis on curriculum planning (Cornett, 1983).

- In Alaska the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) is working with leadership teams of principals, teachers and central office personnel to increase school effectiveness. NWREL is developing a model for leadership training (De Bevoise, 1982).

- Harvard's Graduate School of Education has created a center to improve the instructional leadership skills of principals (Hechinger, 1982).

- Chase Manhattan Bank has provided a grant for training principals in New York City. It provides for sharing of skills among effective principals by providing opportunities for principals to visit and learn about outstanding schools (Hechinger, 1982).

- Vanderbilt University's George Peabody College for Teachers has conducted summer institutes to train principals as instructional leaders rather than managers of buildings. The institute focused on policy issues and significant trends in education (O'Hara, 1982).

- The Center for Action Research, Inc. in Boulder, Colorado, has focused on a staff development program that supports cooperative learning with principals and teachers. Their program focuses on carrying out specific improvement efforts in schools (Little, n.d.).

- Businesses throughout the country are becoming more actively involved in improving the quality of education in schools by donating money (e.g., in California the Bank of America donated over $1 million to the public school system; the San Francisco Education Fund donates money to support specific programs), or by serving on advisory committees, making recommendations about program improvements, offering career guidance and job placement services, providing materials, speakers and classroom demonstrations, and by participating in inservice education for teachers. The nature of business involvement depends on the needs of the schools and the interests of participating businesses (Ozmon, 1982; Hensen and Schergens, 1982).

4. ACTIVITIES

There is no question that increased instructional leadership is critical in our elementary and secondary schools if students are to be prepared for productive participation in the American work force and in our broader society. The National Commission on Excellence in Education has said we are "a nation at risk" with "our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation . . . being overtaken by competitors throughout the world" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). The Task Force on Education for Economic Growth calls for "action for excellence" in education and recommends that the school building principal be placed in charge and held accountable for the instructional quality in his or her

school. The question facing us now is "how." Before outlining specific alternative approaches that a state or school district might consider undertaking, it may be helpful to examine two of the critical conflicts embedded in the concept of the principal as instructional leader.

Manager or Instructional Leader

Perhaps the oldest debate is whether principals should be managers or instructional leaders. In the literature about principals, the word "manager" often takes on negative connotations, while the term "instructional leader" is associated with all that is good and healthy for our nation's children. The manager manages things while the instructional leader devotes his or her time to working with staff and students for improvement. Reactions to these two terms have been more emotional than rational. In reality both functions must be performed. If the principals are not able effectively to fulfill management responsibilities, an environment suitable for teaching and learning will not exist. The safety of students must be insured, discipline must be maintained, teachers must be protected from constant interruptions and instructional materials and resources must be provided. Yet simply performing these management tasks is not enough. Principals must also focus their time and energy in ways that support the coordinating and improving of instruction in their buildings.

Since principals spend nearly all of their time managing, we should find out how those management activities can support student achievement. For example, we know that student discipline is a major time-consuming responsibility. Common sense and experience tell us there are many ways principals can approach student discipline. Our research tells us that student achievement is greater in schools where principals and teachers respect students and communicate high standards for their behavior. We can walk into some buildings and immediately know that learning is valued by staff and students. In other buildings we can see that the principal and teachers expect students to fail or to be disruptive, and the students do not disappoint them. Without any additional time or dollar requirements, principals can restructure the way they manage student discipline and contribute some measure of "instructional leadership."

Similarly, obtaining and allocating resources can be done in ways that effectively transform the manager into an instructional leader. The principal who gives resources to teachers who undertake improvement efforts and who work to implement established goals is providing instructional leadership. The manager who simply allocates available resources on the basis of some arbitrary formula (e.g., it's time to put some money into the math program) or rewards teachers for any other ill-planned or noninstructional purpose (e.g., I haven't given anything to Mr.

Jones in years) not only fails as an instructional leader but also as an effective manager.

This is not to say that principals can meet all their responsibilities as instructional leaders simply by being better managers. However, to the extent principals can make management decisions in ways that support instructional improvement, students will benefit.

The Person or the Function

Another debate currently under way is whether the principal as head of the school should be directly responsible for instructional leadership or whether "instructional leadership" can be viewed as a series of functions that can be performed by others in the school district. Those who believe the principal should be directly responsible for instructional leadership have pointed to the need to train principals as instructional leaders rather than managers. These principals would need to be well informed about the content and process of instruction, participate actively in improvement efforts in the school and supervise and evaluate teachers closely.

Others believe that principals can only be indirectly responsible for instructional leadership and can do that by maintaining a healthy school climate, setting goals and monitoring the school's progress toward their attainment. This approach, based on the assumption that principals do not have time to do everything, suggests the use of other staff within the school as instructional leaders. For example, schools could create positions for a co-principal for instruction and a co-principal for community relations and finance or some differentiation of staff where instructional leadership would be handled by vice principals, counselors and department heads (De Bevoise, 1982).

Still others believe that the principals may be superfluous to the instructional effectiveness of a school and that instructional leadership can be provided by individuals outside the school. For example, Gersten and Carnine describe programs that have improved the level of student achievement with little or no support from the building principal (De Bevoise, 1982). They identified technical assistance as the key factor in the success of the programs.

While the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth recognizes the fact that improvement can occur in schools without the principal as central to the effort, it also realizes that such an approach requires extensive technical assistance from individuals outside the school. Since it us unlikely that sufficient dollars would be available to provide this type of support for every school in the nation and since it is most desirable that we develop capacities to improve ourselves, we must invest in the

people in our schools. One of the most promising investments is in activities that enable principals to become more effective instructional leaders. Many approaches are possible.

The following section of this paper describes three basic activities that all school districts should address in some way. They frame and establish a context for other productive efforts. A subsequent section describes activities to improve the principal's performance as an instructional leader and help him or her "take charge" of the quality of education in the school.

Basic Activities

- Define the Role of the Principal as Instructional Leader

If districts truly want their principals to be instructional leaders, they need to review and refine principal job descriptions so that individual principals, central office staff, parents and the community all understand what is expected. Precise statements of expectations will guide principals in setting priorities and organizing their time. They also will buffer or protect principals from conflicting expectations from teachers, parents and others. Without these statements, principals will continue to be pulled in a multitude of directions by whatever individual or group happens to be there at the time.

Development of useful, practical job descriptions requires careful thought about the ways principals will be expected to spend their time, the relative priority of instructional leadership and the support that will be provided by the central office to carry out the role. Although the ultimate responsibility for defining the role of principal rests with the school board, superintendent and central office staff, input from experienced and effective principals in the district can greatly improve the usefulness of the final product. Districts can establish task forces of principals to outline opportunities, problems or constraints, and develop recommendations for the superintendent, or form broader-based advisory task forces with representation from the central office, teachers, parents and principals.

Examining job descriptions from other school districts will help in developing new ones. Organizations such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, The Center for Educational Policy and Management and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management can identify useful information. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091) has published "Job Descriptions for Principals and Assistant Principals" describing job descriptions from 17 school districts in the United States.

Somewhere in the process of developing job descriptions, districts need to review district policies and revise or eliminate those that constrain the instructional leadership role of the principal. All district policies that affect the principal's performance or responsibilities specified in the job description should be analyzed to insure they are supportive of the role.

The advantages of undertaking this activity are considerable. Principals will have clear statements of what they are supposed to do and will be able to structure their efforts in rational ways. If districts stress the instructional leadership role, principals will focus a greater amount of their energy on activities that directly or indirectly support student achievement. The only disadvantage, if it can even be called a disadvantage, is that teachers, central office personnel and the community will no longer be able to make arbitrary demands on principals' time.

Unknowns include how teachers and the community will react to new job descriptions. However, if some provision is made for their input, problems in this area will be greatly reduced.

Also unknown are the cost implications of particular job descriptions. Since principals already have a heavy workload, care has to be taken not to simply pile more work on them. Thought needs to be given to the priorities of the job and "something has to give." If principals are simply given additional responsibilities without the training and resources they need to perform, they likely will fail. Costs may be incurred for materials, support personnel for principals, and/or training of principals.

- Develop Principal Evaluation and Incentive Systems

Two other papers describe specific activities for developing principal evaluation and incentive programs. They are, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Teachers and Administrators" and "Attracting and Retaining Effective Teachers and Administrators."

In reviewing these papers, it is important to remember that the evaluation system developed by a school district should be consistent with and reinforce the job description of the principal as an instructional leader. If the evaluation program does not contain specific measures of performance related to instructional leadership, the principal is likely to ignore the job description. Lack of consistency between the job description, the evaluation system and the reward and incentive system causes confusion and in effect "conflicting demands" that are counterproductive.

- Develop Plans for Action at the Building Level

Principals must develop realistic, concrete plans to improve their instructional leadership. The plans should include (1) a statement of their goals and objectives, (2) a list of specific activities that they feel will help them achieve their objectives, (3) a timeline for accomplishment of the activities and (4) a description of resources needed. The plans should be short (3-5 pages) and contain activities spread over a minimum of one year.

The goals and objectives specified in the plan should be related to a specific need principals perceive for themselves in their performance in the school. For example, if they do not see themselves as instructional leaders because of time constraints and management responsibilities, one objective might be to improve their management skills. A set of specific activities could be outlined that would help them work with one or more people in the business community to upgrade their skills. Developing a plan would require that they address and resolve such questions as:

- Where should I start?
- Who will I work with in the business community?
- When am I going to set aside time to do this?
- What kind of permission or support will I need from the central office?

In developing their plans, principals will probably need help and direction from people in the district or outside the district. Some of the plans will be "solid" from the start and principals will simply need to perform the various activities to reach their goals. Other plans will be more tentative and require modification along the way. The important thing is not the initial quality of the plan but rather the fact that principals will be planning. They will be committing a certain amount of their time and energy to moving forward and making progress on some need they have identified. While this may seem simplistic, we must remember that principals' lives are so hectic and so demanding that they tend to be reactive rather than taking control and moving forward.

Planning is one way to help principals begin to develop what is referred to in the research literature as "vision." The planning process forces them into analyzing where they and their school are, where they would like to go and how they might get there.

The advantages are many. If every principal in the United States consciously applied judgment about his or her weaknesses in relation to the needs of the schools, laid out a course of action and performed the tasks in the plan, schools could only improve.

The disadvantages are few. Principals could complain that the writing of the 3-5 page plan is simply more paperwork. Principals who are interested in improving their performance could find little or no support at the central office. Changing their behavior to focus on instructional leadership will be a major reorientation for some principals, and all change is painful.

The costs are primarily in terms of time. Principals need to take the time to make and implement their plans. Central office personnel and others in the community should provide assistance and support. Also, depending on the nature of the plan, some principals might need materials or opportunities to take outside courses and workshops.

Other Activities

- Develop Working Relationships With Business to Improve Management Skills

Principals identify lack of time as a major obstacle to developing their skills as instructional leaders. Leadership itself is an elusive concept that is difficult to learn from books or in a classroom. By working with managers identified by business as being particularly effective, principals have an opportunity to gain new perspectives and learn new behaviors.

Interest is growing in schools across the country for internships where prospective principals work with experienced principals who model and explain their behavior. Experienced principals could learn the same way by pairing with one or more effective managers in industry. Such a program would require enough time for principals to observe and understand management in industry. To achieve that, principals would need to spend some time on the job with business managers. Since schools do differ in some ways from organizations in the business world, it also would be useful to have managers from business "live with" a principal for two or three days to understand the differences and make suggestions about changes the principal might make. Collegial relationships would need to be developed.

This sharing of expertise is only one of many possibilities. In "Let's not Reinvent the Wheel: Profiles of School Business Collaboration" (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036), profiles of 10 successful programs between secondary education and business are described. Since the nature of the relationship to be developed depends on the needs of the principal and school, any number of collaborative relationships are possible.

Such an approach gives a principal the chance to observe the skills of managers outside schools and an opportunity to refine their own behaviors based on their experience. It also helps them

understand the skills their students will need to function successfully in the business world.

Costs are primarily associated with time. Principals should allocate enough time to observe and understand the skills of managers in business and industry. Business and industry should devote a significant amount of time and energy to help principals achieve their management goals.

- Develop Elementary and Secondary School Principal-of-the-Year Programs

States could launch programs to identify principals who demonstrate effective instructional leadership, and support the sharing of their knowledge and skills with other principals and with the higher education community responsible for principal training. Particularly effective principals could be nominated for the program by teachers and/or superintendents. Nominations would be based on criteria such as demonstrated performance in improving academic achievement in mathematics, science and technology or exemplary development and reaching goals in those subject areas. Once selected, these principals would be released for some percentage of their time in the schools and given money to conduct seminars or work individually with other principals and with principal training institutions. They would be asked to share, information about the strategies that led to their success, the skills they felt were needed and the obstacles they encountered and surmounted.

This creates awareness of the value of the role of principals as instructional leaders among principals, teachers and superintendents. It promotes sharing practical information that is not now easily available through colleges and universities. Finally, it informs the development of more relevant preservice training programs in colleges and universities.

However, the program does remove particularly effective principals from their schools for a percentage of their time. Additional temporary staff time would be needed in the elementary and secondary schools from which the principals of the year were selected to compensate for the time the principal is out of the school.

Costs would vary, depending on the percentage of time the principals were released from their regular duties and the amount of travel and materials provided to them. The state also should reimburse elementary and high schools for costs incurred of additional staff to assume responsibility for principals selected.

- Develop Relevant, Practical and Inservice Principal Training Programs

Principals report little relationship between what they learn in colleges and universities and what they encounter on the job. Reducing the discrepancy requires developing of programs that teach effective management practices and provide basic understandings and skills in instructional leadership. One approach is to create teams of experienced managers from business and industry, effective principals from elementary and secondary schools and professors in schools of education and business. These teams can review existing instructional programs for principals and insure their relevancy. The experienced managers and effective principals would bring to the task an understanding of the practical, day-to-day requirements of management and instructional leadership. Professors from schools of business would bring a knowledge of the most current and effective materials for teaching management skills. Professors of education would bring an understanding of theory and thought on education administration. By working together, these teams could identify the essential skills and knowledge needed by today's principal and determine learning experiences that will support the acquisition of the skills and knowledge.

This approach combines the best of what is known from theory and practice in the fields of business and education. But it is a relatively long-range strategy for improving principal effectiveness. Developing and teaching the courses takes time. If the focus is on preservice training, which requires years for principals to complete, the results will be less immediate but certainly not less significant than a focus on inservice programs. Concurrent efforts will insure that practicing principals have an immediate opportunity to learn new skills and improve their performance while principals preparing for the profession receive practical, research and theory-based instruction.

Relatively insignificant costs are attached to the approach. However, the effort would need support from business and industry, foundations or public state funds. Programs could be developed in diversified locales (e.g., rural, urban, suburban, focused on elementary or secondary principals; dealing with students from high and low economic status communities). Costs would, of course, eventually be reduced as such programs replace extant but less effective training programs within a state.

- Free the Principal to be Instructional Leader

As we have seen from the research, principals consider their instructional leadership responsibilities as critical yet do not feel they have the time or opportunities to develop themselves along these dimensions. One solution is to hire additional staff to assume responsibility for the "maintenance tasks" of the job and free the principal to assume the instructional leadership role. Under the direction of the principal, positions could be

created with responsibility for discipline, public relations and/or finance. The nature of the position would depend on the principal's perception of those tasks which are most time consuming in his or her situation. This approach would be workable only if the principal had a reasonable understanding of the instructional process and the various roles that instructional leaders can play. Principals would need to have sophisticated skills or outside training and consultative assistance to develop needed skills. Specifically, they would need to be able to (1) set goals for the school's instructional program, (2) secure commitment and support from teachers to insure that there is consistency between the established goals and the materials and processes of teaching in the classroom and (3) insure consistency between all of the above and the performance measures of students. Unless principals already possess these skills or extensive assistance is provided, it would be counterproductive to release "managers" from their responsibilities and expect them to assume a set of responsibilities for which they are not trained.

This approach addresses a significant barrier to instructional leadership -- lack of time. But it decentralizes principals' responsibilities and perhaps their control over all of the elements that contribute to successful schools.

The cost implications are clear. School districts would need to hire an additional staff member. It is likely that they also would need to provide outside consultants over a long period of time.

5. CONCLUSION

We know we have a problem: principals are not being provided with direction, time or training to become instructional leaders. As this paper has illustrated, research provides insights, suggestions and sometimes guidelines as to how to improve the instructional role of the principal. We know principals can and in many cases are providing instructional leadership. The challenge, then, is to make a commitment to support elementary and secondary school principals in promoting quality education for our students. The options are many and the costs are modest. Are we willing to take action?

REFERENCES

Baltzell, D. and R. Dentler. Selecting American School Principals: Research Report. Cambridge, Mass.: ABT Associates, Inc., January 1983.

Blumberg, A. and W. Greenfield. The Effective Principal: Perspectives on School Leadership. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980.

Bossert, S., B. Dwyer, B. Rouan and G. Lee. "The Instructional Management Role of the Principal," Education Administration Quarterly, vol. 18, no. 3, Summer 1982.

Brookover, W.B., C. Beady, P. Flood, J. Schueitzer and J. Wisenbaker. School Social Systems and Student Achievement: School Can Make a Difference. New York: Praeger, 1979.

Cohen, M. and L. Manasse. "Effective Principals: Removing the Roadblocks," The School Administration, November 1982.

Cornett, L. The Preparation and Selection of School Principals. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1983.

Cusick, P. "Secondary Public Schools in America," unpublished draft paper prepared for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1982-83.

Deal, T.E. and L.D. Celotti. "How Much Influence Do (And Can) Educational Administrators Have on Classrooms?" Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 61, no. 7, March 1980.

De Bevoise, W. "The Principal's Role: How Do We Reconcile Expectations With Reality?" R&D Perspectives. Eugene, Ore.: Center for Educational Policy and Management, Winter 1982.

Gorton, R. and K. McIntyre. The Senior High School Principalship, Volume II: The Effective Principal. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 1978.

Hansen, S. and B. Schergens. "Business/Education Partnership: Making Them Education's Business," Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 63, no. 10, June 1982.

Hechinger, F.M. "About Education: Preparing Principals to Take Charge," The New York Times, September 21, 1982.

Hersey, P. and K.H. Blanchard. Management of Organizational Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1977.

Huff, S., D. Lake, Shaalin et al. Principal Differences: Excellence in School Leadership and Management. Boston: McBer & Co., November 1982.

King, R.A. "The Principal and the Law," Administrator's Notebook, vol. 28, no. 2, 1979-1980.

Kirst, M.W. "How to Improve Schools Without Spending More Money," Phi Delta Kappan, September 1982.

Kotter, J.P. "What Effective General Managers Really Do," Harvard Business Review, vol. 60, no. 6, November-December 1982.

Levine, D.V. and J. Stark. Instructional and Organizational Arrangements and Processes for Improving Academic Achievement in Inner City Elementary Schools, final report to the National Institute of Education, 1982.

Little, J.W. "Finding the Limits and Possibilities of Instructional Leadership: Some Possibilities for Practical and Collaborative Work With Principals," unpublished paper submitted to the National Institute of Education. Boulder, Co.: Center for Action Research, Inc., n.d.

Little, J.W. School Success and Staff Development: The Role of Staff Development in Urban Desegregated Schools, final report to the National Institute of Education, 1981.

Lortie, D.C., G. Crow and Prolman. Elementary Principals in Suburbia: An Occupational and Organizational Study, final report to the National Institute of Education, 1983.

Manasse, A.L. "Effective Principals: Effective at What?" Principal, vol. 61, no. 4. March 1982.

Martin, W.J. "The Managerial Behavior of High School Principals," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1980.

McDaniel, T.R. "What's Your P.Q. (Principal Quotient)? A Quiz on Improving Instruction," Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 63, no. 7, March 1982.

McLeary, L.E. and S.D. Thompson. The Senior High School Principalship, vol. III: Summary Report. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 1979.

Mintzberg, H. The Nature of Managerial Work. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

Morris, Van Cleve, R. Crowson, E. Huruitz Jr. and C. Porter-Gehrie. The Urban Principal: Discretionary Decision-making in a Large Educational Organization. Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1981.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. U.S. Department of Education, April 1983.

ara, J. Education Week, vol. II, no. 1, September 8, 1982.

Ozmon, H. "Adopt-A-School: Definitely Not Business as Usual," Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 63, no. 5, January 1982.

Persell, C. "Effective Principals: What Do We Know From Various Educational Literatures?" paper prepared for the National Institute of Education, 1982.

Pohland, P.A. and V.L. Higbee. "Formal Expectations and the Principalship," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, California, April 1979.

Sarason, B. The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971.

Schmitt, N., R. Now-Metitty, F. Fitzgerald and Jorgensen. Criterion-related and Content Validity of the NASSP Assessment Center. Reston, Va.: NASSP, n.d.

Shoemaker, J. and H.W. Fraser. "What Principals Can Do: Some Implications From Studies of Effective Schooling," Phi Delta Kappan, November 1981.

Sproull, L.S. "Managerial Attention in New Education Programs: A Micro-Behavioral Study of Program Implementation," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1977.

Uang, F.L. "Duties of Principals as Revealed Through School Board Rules" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, Department of Education, 1931), as cited by P.B. Jacobson and W.C. Reavis in Duties of School Principals. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1941.

Weick, K. "Administering Education in Loosely Coupled Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 63, no. 10, June 1982.

Weick, K. "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," Administrative Science Quarterly, vol. 21, no. 1, March 1976.

Wellisch, J.B., A.H. MacQueen, R.A. Carriere and C.A. Duck. "School Management and Organization in Successful Schools," Sociology of Education, vol. 51, 1978.

Yukl, G. "Managerial Leadership and the Effective Principal," in The Effective Principal: A Research Summary. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982.